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LETTER
OF
PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON
TO
HON. FRANK E. DOREMUS
CHAIRMAN DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

ASSIGNING CERTAIN REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING
IN THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OF 1914



PRESENTED BY MR. THOMPSON

SEPTEMBER 9 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 5), 1914.—Ordered to be printed

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WHITE HOUSE, *September 4, 1914.*

MY DEAR MR. DOREMUS: I have read your letter of September 1 with a keen appreciation of its importance. It appeals to me as the leader of the party now in power with peculiar force and persuasiveness. The close of a very extraordinary session of Congress is at hand which has, I venture to say, been more fruitful in important legislation of permanent usefulness to the country than any session of Congress within the memory of the active public men of our generation. A great constructive program has been carried through for which the country has long waited, and has been carried through with the approval and support of judicious men of all parties, and we have abundant reason to congratulate ourselves upon the record that has been made during the busy 17 months we have devoted to our great legislative task.

APPEAL FULLY WARRANTED.

Certainly in ordinary circumstances, if we were free to disengage ourselves for the purpose, we would be warranted in now directing our energies to a great campaign in support of an appeal to the country to give us the encouragement of its indorsement at the autumn elections.

We could go to the country with a very sincere appeal in which there need be no pretense or boast of any kind, but a plain statement of things actually accomplished which ought to be and I think would be entirely convincing. It is a record which shows us at peace with all the world; the questions which plagued business with doubt and uncertainty and irresponsible criticism out of the way, thoughtfully settled and disposed of; the apparent antagonism between government and business cleared away and brought to an end with the plain reckoning accomplished; the path for sure-footed adjustment clear ahead of us; prosperity certain to come by means which all can approve and applaud.

OTHER GREAT PLANS AHEAD.

Moreover, there is a program of another kind ahead of us to which it is inspiring to look forward—a program free from debate except as to the best means by which to accomplish what all desire.

The great questions immediately ahead of us are the building up of our merchant marine with all that that means in the development and diversification of our foreign commerce and the systematic conservation and economic use of our national resources, subjects much

talked about but little acted upon. Here are other great pieces of constructive legislation waiting to be done to which we could turn without any controversy except, as I have said, as to the best ways of doing them.

I believe that ways can be found to do these things readily enough if the country will give us its generous support and trust us to do them; and it would have been a genuine pleasure to me to ask to be given again colleagues such as I have had in the two Houses of Congress during the present memorable session.

I trust that there will be many occasions upon which I may have the privilege of calling the attention of my fellow countrymen to the fine and unselfish service which has been rendered them by their present representatives, ready at all times to respond to any appeal which spoke convincingly of the public welfare.

TIME TO "STAY ON JOB."

But in view of the unlooked-for international situation our duty has taken on an unexpected aspect. Every patriotic man ought now to "stay on his job" until the crisis is passed, and ought to stay where his job can best be done. We must do whatever is necessary and forego whatever is not necessary to keep us in close and active concert in order to relieve in every possible way the stress and strain put upon our people during the continuance of the present extraordinary conditions.

My job, I now know, can be done best only if I devote my whole thought and attention to it and think of nothing but the duties of the hour. I am not at liberty, and shall not be, so far as I can see, to turn away from these duties to undertake any kind of political canvass.

HE MUST KEEP AT WORK.

In the present emergency I am keenly aware of the twofold responsibility I am called upon to discharge; the responsibility which devolves upon me as President of the United States and the responsibility under which I am laid as leader of a great political party.

Of course, the whole country will expect of me and my own conscience will exact of me that I think first of my duties as President, responsible for exercising so far as I have the ability, constant guidance in the affairs of the country, both domestic and foreign.

MUCH DEPENDS ON PRESIDENT.

The labors of Congress have a natural and customary limit; the work of the houses can be and will be finished; Congress can adjourn. But the President can not, especially in times like these, turn away from his official work even for a little while. Too much depends upon his keeping all the threads of what is occurring in his hands.

I have therefore reached the conclusion that I can not in any ordinary sense take an active part in the approaching campaign; that I must remain here to attend to the serious work sure to fill the months immediately before us—months that will carry with them obligations, no doubt, of the most tremendous sort. I know that

you will feel similarly about your own obligations, will feel that they must remain to do their work of necessary and pressing service, and bring it to a successful conclusion.

SHALL LET PUBLIC KNOW.

I shall, no doubt, take occasion, as opportunity offers, to state, and perhaps restate, to the country in the clearest and most convincing terms I can command the things which the Democratic Party has attempted to do in the settlement of great questions which have for many a long year pressed for solution, and I earnestly hope they will generously open their minds to what I may have to say, but I shall not allow my eagerness to win their approval or my earnest desire to be granted by their suffrages the support of another Congress to interfere with the daily performance of my official duties or distract my mind from them.

The record men make speaks for itself. The country can not be deceived concerning it, and will assess it justly. What it chiefly expects and demands, and what it will certainly be most surely won by, is the performance of duty without fear or favor and without regard to personal consequences.

COUNTRY GREATER THAN PARTIES.

And certainly this is a time when America expects every man to do his duty without thought of profit or advantage to himself. America is greater than any party. America can not properly be served by any man who for a moment measures his interest against her advantage. The time has come for great things. These are days big with destiny for the United States, as for other nations of the world. A little wisdom, a little courage, a little self-forgetful devotion may under God turn that destiny this way or that. Great hearts, great natures, will respond. Even little men will rejoice to be stimulated and guided and set an heroic example. Parties will fare well enough without nursing if the men who make them up and the men who lead them forget themselves to serve a cause and set a great people forward on the path of liberty and peace.

Cordially and sincerely, yours.

WOODROW WILSON.

Hon. FRANK E. DOREMUS,

Chairman Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

WASHINGTON, D. C.







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